rating from the American Bar Association.

She was initially nominated in January 1998, almost 17 months ago. She participated in an extensive two-part confirmation hearing before the Committee back on July 30, 1998. Thereafter she received a number of sets of written questions from a number of Senators and responded in August. A second round of written questions was sent and she responded by the middle of September. Despite the efforts of Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator KENNEDY, Senator SPECTER and myself to have her considered by the Committee, she was not included on an agenda and not voted on during all of 1998. Her nomination was returned to the President without action by this Committee or the Senate in late October.

This year the President renominated Ms. Berzon in January. She participated in her second confirmation hearing two weeks ago, was sent additional sets of written questions, responded and got and answered another question. I do not know why these questions were not asked last year. I do hope that the Committee will vote to report her nomination to the Senate on Thursday and that the Senate will finally, at long last, take the opportunity to confirm her to the federal bench.

The saga of this brilliant lawyer and good person is a long one, but it is not an isolated story. Hers is not even the longest pending nomination. That distinction belongs to Judge Richard Paez who was initially nominated in January 1996—over three and one half years ago—favorably reported by this Committee last year but not voted upon by the Senate. He was renominated in January, as well. His nomination is in limbo before the Senate Judiciary Committee, more than three years after this fine Hispanic judge was first nominated by the President.

In addition, there is the nomination of Justice Ronnie L. White to the federal court in Missouri, a nomination I spoke to the Senate about earlier this week. This past weekend marked the 2-year anniversary of the nomination of this outstanding jurist to what is now a judicial emergency vacancy on the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Missouri. He is currently a member of the Missouri Supreme Court.

He was nominated by President Clinton in June of 1997, 2 years ago. It took 11 months before the Senate would even allow him to have a confirmation hearing. His nomination was then reported favorably on a 13 to 3 vote by the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 21, 1998. Senators HATCH, THURMOND, GRASSLEY, SPECTER, KYL, and DEWINE were the Republican members of the Committee who voted for him along with the Democratic members. Senators ASHCROFT, ABRAHAM and SESSIONS voted against him.

Even though he had been voted out overwhelmingly, he sat on the calendar, and the nomination was returned to the President after 16 months with no action.

The President has again renominated him. I have called again upon the Senate Judiciary Committee to act on this qualified nomination. Justice White deserves better than benign neglect. The people in Missouri deserve a fully qualified and fully staffed Federal bench.

Justice White has one of the finest records—and the experience and standing—of any lawyer that has come before the Judiciary Committee. He has served in the Missouri legislature, the office of the city counselor for the City of St. Louis, and he was a judge in the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Eastern District of Missouri before his current service as the first African American ever to serve on the Missouri Supreme Court.

Having been voted out of Committee by a 4–1 margin, having waited for 2 years, this distinguished African American at least deserves a vote, up or down. Senators can stand up and say they will vote for or against him, but let this man have his vote.

Twenty-four months after being nominated and after being renominated five months ago, the nomination remains pending without action before the Senate Judiciary Committee. People like Justice Ronnie L. White deserve to have their nominations treated with dignity and dispatch. Twenty-four months is far too long to have to wait for Senate action.

The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court wrote in his Year-End Report in 1997: ''Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote. The Senate confirmed only 17 judges in 1996 and 36 in 1997, well under the 101 judges it confirmed in 1994.'' He went on to note: ''The Senate is surely under no obligation to confirm any particular nominee, but after the necessary time for inquiry it should vote him up or vote him down.''

For the last several years I have been urging the Judiciary Committee and the Senate to proceed to consider and confirm judicial nominees more promptly and without the years of delay that now accompany so many nominations. I hope the Committee will not delay any longer in reporting the nomination of Justice Ronnie L. White to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri and that the Senate will finally act on the nomination of this fine African-American jurist.

In explaining why he chose to withdraw from consideration after waiting 15 months for Senate consideration, another minority nominee, Jorge Rangel, wrote to the President and explained:

''Our judicial system depends on men and women of good will who agree to serve when asked to do so. But public service asks too much when those of us who answer the call to service are subjected to a confirmation process dominated by interminable delays and inaction. Patience has its virtues, but it also has its limits''.

Justice White has been exceedingly patient. He remains one of the 10 longest-pending judicial nominations before the Senate, along with Judge Richard Paez and Marsha Berzon.

Acting to fill judicial vacancies is a constitutional duty that the Senate—and all of its members—are obligated to fulfill. In its unprecedented slowdown in the handling of nominees since the 104th Congress, the Senate is shirking its duty. That is wrong and should end.

As the Senate recesses for the Independence Day holiday, I am glad to see that the Senate is taking a few small steps toward responsible action by confirming five qualified District Court nominees. I will continue to work to see that the scores of remaining nominees be treated fairly.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now return to legislative session.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of all of our colleagues, Senator LEAHY and I have a couple of housekeeping measures to attend to, which we will do now. Then there will be a vote on the McConnell-Abraham second-degree amendment. If that amendment is successful, we will move to final passage. If that amendment is not successful, it is my understanding Senator SARBANES wishes to address the Senate further on the underlying Brownback amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1159, AS FURTHER MODIFIED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send to the desk a modification of amendment No. 1159.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is so modified.

The amendment, as further modified, is as follows:

On page 21, line 22, before the period insert the following: '': *Provided further*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, not to exceed $2,000,000 shall be available for grants to nongovernmental organizations that work with orphans who are transitioning out of institutions to teach life skills and job skills'': *Provided further*, that of the amount available under the heading 'ASSISTANCE FOR EASTERN EUROPE AND THE BALTIC STATES' for Romania, $4,400,000 shall

be provided solely to the Romanian Department of Child Protection for activities of such Department to provide emergency aid for the child victims of the present economic crisis in Romania, including activities relating to supplemental food support and maintenance, support for in-home foster case, and supplemental support for special needs residential care''.

AMENDMENT NOS. 1184 AND 1185

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send an amendment on behalf of Senator BYRD and an amendment on behalf of Senator NICKLES to the desk. They have been cleared. I ask unanimous consent they be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (Nos. 1184 and 1185) were agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1184

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate regarding assistance under the Camp David Accords)

On page 128, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following new section:

SEC. ___. SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) Egypt and Israel together negotiated the Camp David Accords, an historic breakthrough in beginning the process of bringing peace to the Middle East.

(2) As part of the Camp David Accords, a concept was reached regarding the ratio of United States foreign assistance between Egypt and Israel, a formula which has been followed since the signing of the Accords.

(3) The United States is reducing economic assistance to Egypt and Israel, with the agreement of those nations.

(4) The United States is committed to maintaining proportionality between Egypt and Israel in United States foreign assistance programs.

(5) Egypt has consistently fulfilled an historic role of peacemaker in the context of the Arab-Israeli disputes.

(6) The recent elections in Israel offer fresh hope of resolving the remaining issues of dispute in the region.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that the United States should provide Egypt access to an interest bearing account as part of the United States foreign assistance program pursuant to the principles of proportionality which underlie the Camp David Accords.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, my views on foreign assistance are well known. I don't like it. I understand there are circumstances in which the United States needs to extend a helping hand to other nations facing political and economic strains that we thankfully do not have to endure. I simply think that the United States spends too much of its citizens' hard-earned tax dollars overseas, and that is why I traditionally vote against the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill.

My reluctance to send U.S. tax dollars overseas leads me to scrutinize closely those programs that we do fund. One of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign assistance is the Middle East, and in particular Israel, and to a lesser extent, Egypt. These nations are our strongest allies in a troubled region, and I firmly believe that maintaining a strong relationship with them is in the best strategic interests of the United States. We cannot forget that it was Egypt and Israel that negotiated the Camp David Accords, an historic breakthrough in the efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. As part of the Camp David Accords, a concept was reached regarding the ratio of United States foreign assistance between Egypt and Israel. This formula has been followed since the signing of the Accords.

I have believed for many years that the United States is spending too much on foreign assistance to Egypt and Israel. I have tried in the past, to no avail, to reduce the level of assistance being sent to Israel. I am pleased that the United States has finally embarked on a program of reducing economic assistance to both nations, with the agreement of those nations. However, maintaining proportionality between Egypt and Israel as the level of foreign assistance is reduced is vitally important, and never more so than now, when the recent elections in Israel offer fresh hope of restarting the peace process.

Unfortunately, the mechanism by which United States foreign assistance is currently being provided to Egypt and Israel has resulted in an imbalance to that program in that Israel has the unique advantage of having immediate access to an interest bearing account while Egypt has not been accorded the same treatment. This, I believe, is a procedure which can be interpreted as a departure from the standard of fairness that is central to United States assistance under the Camp David Accords.

Mr. President, this is an injustice that should be corrected. Speaking frankly, it is my opinion that neither Israel nor Egypt should be earning interest on United States foreign assistance. But, under the principles of parity that underlie the Camp David Accords, both nations should receive the same treatment. Egypt and Israel are pivotal allies in the Middle East, and the United States should accord them equal treatment in disbursing its foreign assistance.

AMENDMENT NO. 1185

(Purpose: Regarding availability of United States assistance for the Palestian Authority)

Strike section 577, and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 577. UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

(1) GAO CERTIFICATION.—NOT MORE THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE OBLIGATION OF FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO THIS ACT FOR ASSISTANCE FOR THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES SHALL CERTIFY THAT THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY—

(A) has adopted an acceptable accounting system to ensure that such funds will be used for their intended assistance purposes; and

(B) has cooperated with the Comptroller General in the certification process under this paragraph.

(2) GAO AUDITS.—

(A) AUTHORITY.—Six months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an audit to determine the extent to which the Palestinian Authority is implementing an acceptable accounting system in tracking the use of funds made available by the Act for assistance for the Palestinian Authority.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes all action on S. 1234, it not be engrossed and be held at the desk. I further ask that when the House of Representatives' companion measure is received in the Senate, the Senate immediately proceed to its consideration, all after the enacting clause of the House bill be stricken and the text of S. 1234, as passed, be inserted in lieu thereof, the House bill, as amended, be read for the third time and passed, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, and the foregoing occur without any intervening action or debate.

I further ask unanimous consent that upon passage by the Senate of the House companion measure, as amended, the passage of S. 1234 be vitiated, and the bill be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1186, 1187, AND 1188, EN BLOC

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that three amendments that have been cleared on the other side on behalf of the Senator from Vermont be considered en bloc and agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] proposes en bloc amendments numbered 1186, 1187, and 1188.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendments are agreed to.

The amendments (Nos. 1186, 1187, and 1188) were agreed to, en bloc, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1186

At the appropriate place, insert:

AUTHORIZATIONS

SEC. . The Secretary of the Treasury may, to fulfill commitments of the United States, (1) effect the United States participation in the fifth general capital increase of the African Development Bank, the first general capital increase of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, and the first general capital increase of the Inter-American Investment Corporation; (2) contribute on behalf of the United States to the eighth replenishment of the resources of the African

Development Fund, the twelfth replenishment of the International Development Association. The following amounts are authorized to be appropriated without fiscal year limitation for payment by the Secretary of the Treasury: $40,847,011 for paid-in capital, and $639,932,485 for callable capital, of the African Development Bank; $29,870,087 for paid-in capital, and $139,365,533 for callable capital, of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; $125,180,000 for paid-in capital of the Inter-American Investment Corporation; $300,000,000 for the African Development Fund; $2,410,000,000 for the International Development Association; and $50,000,000 for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development's HIPC Trust Fund.

AMENDMENT NO. 1187

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following:

WORKING CAPITAL FUND

SEC. . Section 635 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2395) is amended by adding a new subsection (l) as follows:

''(l) There is hereby established a working capital fund for the United States Agency for International Development which shall be available without fiscal year limitation for the expenses of personal and non-personal services, equipment and supplies for: (A) International Cooperative Administrative Support Services; (B) central information technology, library, audiovisual and administrative support services; (C) medical and health care of participants and others; and (D) such other functions which the Administrator of such agency, with the approval of the Office of Management and Budget, determines may be provided more advantageously and economically as central services.

''(2) The capital of the fund shall consist of the fair and reasonable value of such supplies, equipment and other assets pertaining to the functions of the fund as the Administrator determines and any appropriations made available for the purpose of providing capital, less related liabilities.

''(3) The fund shall be reimbursed or credited with advance payments for services, equipment or supplies provided from the fund from applicable appropriations and funds of the agency, other federal agencies and other sources authorized by section 607 of this Act at rates that will recover total expenses of operation, including accrual of annual leave and depreciations Receipts from the disposal of, or payments for the loss or damage to, property held in the fund, rebates, reimbursements, refunds and other credits applicable to the operation of the fund may be deposited in the fund.

''(4) the agency shall transfer to the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts as of the close of the fiscal year such amounts which the Administrator determines to be in excess of the needs of the fund.

''(5) The fund may be charged with the current value of supplies and equipment returned to the working capital of the fund by a post, activity or agency and the proceeds shall be credited to current applicable appropriations.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1188

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following:

DEVELOPMENT CREDIT AUTHORITY PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans and loan guarantees, up to $7,500,000 to be derived by transfer from funds appropriated by this Act to carry out Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and funds appropriated by this Act under the heading, ''Assistance for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States'', to remain available until expanded, as authorized by section 635 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; Provided further, That for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, up to $500,000 of this amount may be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Operating Expenses of the Agency for International Development''; Provided further, That the provisions of section 107A(d) (relating to general provisions applicable to the Development Credit Authority) of the foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as contained in section 306 of H.R. 1486 as reported by the House Committee on International Relations on May 9, 1997, shall be applicable to direct loans and loan guarantees provided under this heading.

Mr. LEAHY. I ask that the amendments be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They have been agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1119

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the McConnell amendment. All those in favor—

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, are the yeas and nays not ordered?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have not been ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on the McConnell amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to McConnell amendment No. 1119. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. MACK) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. ALLARD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nasy 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 191 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Abraham	Cleland	Grassley
Akaka	Collins	Gregg
Baucus	Craig	Harkin
Bayh	Daschle	Hatch
Bennett	DeWine	Hollings
Biden	Durbin	Inouye
Bond	Edwards	Johnson
Boxer	Enzi	Kennedy
Breaux	Feingold	Kerrey
Bryan	Feinstein	Kerry
Bunning	Fitzgerald	Kohl
Burns	Gorton	Leahy
Campbell	Graham	Levin
McConnell	Robb	Specter
Mikulski	Rockefeller	Stevens
Moynihan	Santorum	Torricelli
Reed	Sarbanes	Wellstone
Reid	Schumer	

NAYS—45

Allard	Grams	Murkowski
Ashcroft	Hagel	Murray
Bingaman	Helms	Nickles
Brownback	Hutchinson	Roberts
Byrd	Hutchison	Roth
Chafee	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Jeffords	Shelby
Conrad	Kyl	Smith (NH)
Coverdell	Landrieu	Smith (OR)
Crapo	Lautenberg	Snowe
Dodd	Lieberman	Thomas
Domenici	Lincoln	Thompson
Dorgan	Lott	Thurmond
Frist	Lugar	Warner
Gramm	McCain	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Mack	Voinovich

The amendment (No. 1119) was agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. SARBANES. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1118

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the first-degree amendment, as amended.

The amendment (No. 1118) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. COVERDELL. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we are ready for final passage.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, this will be the last recorded vote for tonight. We will then go to the Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill, and, hopefully, good progress, or all progress, can be completed on that tonight, with the possibility of stacked votes on or in relation to the Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill in the morning.

The next recorded vote, though, will be at 10:30 in the morning on a cloture motion with regard to Social Security lockbox. Hopefully, there will be other stacked votes in that sequence. For now, that is the only one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the third reading of the bill.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the Senate is now considering S. 1234, the foreign operations and export financing appropriations bill for fiscal year 2000.

The Senate bill provides $12.7 billion in budget authority and $4.7 billion in new outlays to operate the programs of the Department of State, Export and Military Assistance, Bilateral and Multilateral Economic Assistance, and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year 2000.

When outlays from prior year budget authority and other completed actions are taken into account, the bill totals $12.7 billion in budget authority and $13.2 billion in outlays for fiscal year 2000.

The subcommittee is below its Section 302(B) allocation for budget authority and outlays.

I urge the adoption of the bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the table was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1234, FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS, 2000—SPENDING COMPARISONS—SENATE-REPORTED BILL

[Fiscal year 2000, in millions of dollars]

	General purpose	Crime	Mandatory	Total
Senate-reported bill:				
Budget authority	12,700	.....	44	12,744
Outlays	13,139	.....	44	13,183
Senate 302(b) allocation:				
Budget authority	12,701	.....	44	12,745
Outlays	13,150	.....	44	13,194
1999 level:				
Budget authority	13,266	.....	45	13,311
Outlays	12,740	.....	45	12,785
President's request:				
Budget authority	14,070	.....	44	14,114
Outlays	14,104	.....	44	14,148
House-passed bill:				
Budget authority	.....	.....	44	.....
Outlays	8,456	.....	44	.....
SENATE-REPORTED BILL COMPARED TO:				
Senate 302(b) allocation:				
Budget authority	(1)	.....	.....	(1)
Outlays	(11)	.....	.....	(11)
1999 level:				
Budget authority	(566)	.....	(1)	(567)
Outlays	399	.....	(1)	398
President's request:				
Budget authority	(1,370)	.....	.....	(1,370)
Outlays	(965)	.....	.....	(965)
House-passed bill:				
Budget authority	12,700	.....	.....	12,700
Outlays	4,683	.....	.....	4,683

Note: Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency with scorekeeping conventions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues an issue which I believe is of importance in the FY 2000 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill: U.S. assistance to Egypt. Before I begin, however, I thank the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee for their expert and sound guidance on this bill. They deserve our commendation for working with such tight 302(b) allocations.

Egypt is a country that many in the Senate hold in high regard. Egypt is a dependable and steady ally in the Middle East. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of peace between Israel and Egypt, a peace which has served and continues to serve as a benchmark of the end of hostilities between Arabs and Israelis. Since peace between Egypt and Israel was established in 1979, Congress has recognized that in America's relations with these two allies that fair treatment of both Israel and Egypt in the provision of foreign assistance is a key feature in preserving peace and stability in the region.

The administration requested as part of its FY 2000 budget that a portion of Egypt's military assistance held in reserve to pay for the potential termination of contracts accrue interest. This proposal, known as an interest bearing account (IBA), would allow interest to accrue on approximately $470 million in the termination liability account for Egypt. Israel's military assistance has been treated in this way for some time, treatment that I and many others here support. The net impact of granting Egypt this treatment would be about $20 million in interest to Egypt, without any additional cost or outlay by the U.S. taxpayer.

Like many of my colleagues, I support the administration's request for an IBA for Egypt, and I feel very strongly that Egypt should have the same terms as Israel. The Department of State has made a commitment to Egypt on this issue, and I think it is important that this commitment be kept.

Despite our support for an IBA, the Congressional Budget Office has told us that the IBA would be scored as a $470 million outlay—despite the fact that it actually costs nothing—and would thus break the Senate's tight outlay ceiling for this bill. Although support for an IBA for Egypt is strong—I am confident that on the merits an Amendment proposing an IBA would have the support of the vast majority of my colleagues—the Senate is confined at this time in our actions by budgetary pressures.

I am hopeful that we might still be able to resolve this scoring issue and perhaps address the question of an IBA for Egypt in Conference.

Again, I thank the subcommittee chairman and ranking member for their work on this bill. I look forward to continuing to work with them on this issue.

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators STEVENS, MCCONNELL, COVERDELL, DEWINE, and I may enter into a colloquy on funding for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and the State Department.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I say to Senator STEVENS, Senators COVERDELL, DEWINE, and I have afforded an amendment No. 1148 to the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill regarding increased funding for the State Department's counterdrug efforts.

Mr. STEVENS. I am aware of the amendment.

Mr. GRASSLEY. As the Senator knows, we have been working on this bill and on others to ensure adequate funding for our Nation's counter narcotics efforts. And I appreciate the committee's past support in this regard. I am aware that we face tough budget decisions and we need to balance many program needs within a balanced budget.

Mr. STEVENS. We have had to make a lot of tough decisions in this bill while trying to ensure that we meet the needs of many critical programs. I know that Senator MCCONNELL and Senator LEAHY and the subcommittee have worked shared to be fair, and they have had to make tough choices.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I appreciate their efforts. Our amendment asks for more funding for INL, although it is still below the President's request. Senators COVERDELL, DEWINE, and I have worked with the committee in the past on this issue. It is my understanding that the House is working to provide a higher level.

Mr. STEVENS. I believe that is the case but the House has not yet made a final decision on appropriation levels for the State Department's counter narcotics programs.

Mr. GRASSLEY. If there is a difference between the House and Senate levels, that will mean that the final appropriation levels will be conferencable, is that correct?

Mr. STEVENS. That is the case.

Mr. GRASSLEY. It is my understanding that if the numbers in House and Senate bills are different that it is your intention to work during the conference to ensure that we see a higher level of funding for this program?

Mr. STEVENS. That is correct. I will work on trying to see a higher level of funding. But let me point out that there is a difference between the House and Senate allocation levels and that we will have a lot of reconciling to do.

Mr. COVERDELL. I ask the distinguished Senator from Alaska if that effort will preclude increased funding for INL?

Mr. STEVENS. It does not preclude it, and I will work to ensure that we try to get more funding.

Mr. COVERDELL. I know that Senator GRASSLEY and Senator DEWINE share my concern that we ensure that our international counter drug programs here and elsewhere receive the support they need to keep drugs off our streets and out of our homes. We had a press conference today on just his point. We have been fighting a battle the last few years to raise the visibility of the need for serious counter drug efforts and the need to fund those adequately. The State Department program is an important part of that effort.

Mr. DEWINE. If I might add something to the comments of my distinguished colleague from Georgia. Last year, the Congress added significant new money into our international and interdiction efforts. This was in part a down payment on the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act, that I introduced in the 105th Congress. It is

important that we ensure that the effort begun then is sustained. Having seen first hand the positive benefits of this program in this region. I strongly believe that increased funding for INL should be strongly considered in conference.

Mr. STEVENS. I share the Senators' concerns for the need for sustained and adequate funding.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I too share this concern. The Foreign Operations bill is an effort to address that concern and the many other programs that need attention in our foreign policy.

Mr. GRASSLEY. It is my understanding that every effort will be made in conference to ensure that there will be increased funding for the State Department's counter narcotics programs. If that is the case, then I am prepared to withdraw my amendment and I thank Senator STEVENS and Senator MCCONNELL for their consideration in this matter.

Mr. COVERDELL. I join Senator GRASSLEY in thanking the committee.

Mr. DEWINE. I also thank the committee.

IMF GOLD SALE

Mr. ALLARD. Will the distinguished Senator from Kentucky yield for a question?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will be happy to yield to the Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. As the chairman of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, is the Senator aware of a proposal by the Administration to support the sale of some ten million ounces of gold by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from its gold reserves in order to provide debt relief for countries under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC)?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes, I am aware of this proposal. Let me say to the Senator from Colorado that the proposal to have the IMF sell its gold in order to provide debt relief to the HIPC nations is a matter of significant concern to me.

Mr. ALLARD. I share the chairman's concern. The sale of IMF gold would have the effect of depressing gold prices well beyond the twenty year low to which the price of gold has already plunged. As I think the Senator from Kentucky well knows, a further drop in the price of gold will not only hurt American industry but cost thousands of U.S. workers their jobs. Equally important, falling gold prices will directly impact 36 of the 41 nations that are slated to benefit from the HIPC program. This is because those 36 nations are in fact gold producers, and their economies would suffer to such a degree that the damage done to their economies resulting from depressed gold prices would be greater than any debt relief they might receive. Does the Senator agree with that analysis?

Mr. MCCONNELL. The Senator from Colorado is exactly right. Considering the fact that barely 40 percent of the interest to be derived from the investment of the proceeds from the sale of the IMF gold would actually be available to the HIPC nations for debt relief, it seems to me that this amounts to a cruel hoax. Of particular concern to me is the fact that the sale of the IMF gold would reduce gold prices to such an extent that the harm done to HIPC nations' economies will likely exceed any benefit from this debt relief effort. I believe the issue of debt relief for the HIPC nations is important and must be dealt with, but such a program must be designed to reduce the economic burden on these countries not compound them.

Mr. ALLARD. I ask the chairman, is it the case that in order for this proposed IMF gold sale to go forward, that the Congress must specifically authorize the U.S. representative to the IMF to cast a vote in favor of such a sale?

Mr. MCCONNELL. The Senator from Colorado is exactly correct. Existing law 22 U.S.C. 286c specifically requires Congress, by law, to authorize such action. I would point out to the Senator, as I am sure he is already aware, that absent an act of Congress, the statute makes it clear that neither the President nor any person or agency acting on behalf of the United States can vote to approve the sale of IMF gold.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the chairman for that clarification. Would it be fair to conclude, I say to my friend from Kentucky, that you are not in a position to support legislation that would seek to have this Congress authorize U.S. approval of the sale of IMF gold?

Mr. MCCONNELL. The Senator from Colorado is absolutely correct. For the reasons I have outlined, I believe the proposal to sell IMF gold as part of the HIPC Initiative is misguided and just plain bad policy. I could not support legislation authorizing such a sale as part of this or any bill. And, I will say to the distinguished Senator from Colorado, that when I take this bill to conference with the House, we will include a Statement of Manager's language that will reiterate that the sale of IMF gold cannot go forward unless we in Congress specifically provide authorization.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the chairman.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern about the proposed reduction of funding for the Peace Corps in this foreign operations appropriations bill—a reduction that is contrary to the will of Congress as expressed by the overwhelming, bipartisan support for the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act, which passed unanimously this session in both Houses of Congress.

I am mindful of the constraints imposed by the lower allocations to the appropriators. But Congress has spoken affirmatively on the issue of increased funding for the Peace Corps. The authorizing committee and, then, this body, supported the bill by unanimous consent. A few months earlier, the House passed the measure by a vote of 326–90. President Clinton immediately signed the bill in May.

Mr. President, as chairman of the authorizing committee for the Peace Corps, I worked with the committees' ranking Member and former Peace Corps Volunteer, Senator DODD, to sponsor the Peace Corps Act. The Act authorizes a 12 percent increase for Fiscal Year 2000 and is part of a multiyear plan to enable the Peace Corps to reach its goal of 10,000 Volunteers by 2003. Reaching this mark has been a long-standing goal of Congress—a goal set into law in 1985.

Despite the consistent endorsement of the growth plan, the Appropriations Committee has recommended a $50 million reduction in funding from the authorized amount (and $20 million less than the Peace Corps current budget of $240 million). This appropriation is ill-advised. If enacted, it would deny the Peace Corps the opportunity to reach its goal of 10,000 Volunteers serving abroad. And, even worse, it would force the Agency to cut the current level of Volunteers by over 1,000 (That is, from 6,700 to 5,700) Volunteers).

I recognize the constraints under which the Peace Corps and all federal programs must operate. For that reason, I have been a close observer of the Peace Corps activities, as has Senator DODD, in exercising our oversight responsibilities. I remain confident that the Peace Corps remains the best foreign assistance program of its kind, and that it has systems in place to continue fielding Volunteers responsibly and efficiently. Part of the genius of the Peace Corps is its ability to use a relatively small amount of money to do big things. Even if the Peace Corps received full funding at $270 million, the amount would be about 1 percent of our foreign aid budget.

Mr. President, I believe that the Peace Corps is well prepared to begin implementation of the multi-year plan. I urge the appropriators to join the Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle and in both Houses who have overwhelmingly endorsed this worthy goal.

U.S.-HAITI POLICY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I have a long standing interest in Haiti. I have made seven trips to this island nation in the past four years. I have spoken often about the developments in that country here on the Senate floor. I am here today because I am extremely concerned about the tumultuous conditions in Haiti. And, I feel the United States must understand the immediacy and vast importance of the present situation in order to act in an appropriate way.